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VIRGINIA.

ADDRESS

BEFORE THE

Washington and Jefferson Societies,

OF THE

UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA.

JUNE 30, 1868.

Altera jam teritur bellis civilibus actas.

* * * * *

Ferrisque rursus occupabitur solum.—HORACE.

“Another age now worn out in civil wars.

* * * * *

And to the wild beast and the wilderness

Restoring soil which Romans called their country.”

BY GEN'L JOHN S. PRESTON.

LYNCHBURG:
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1868.

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CORRESPONDENCE.

UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA, July 1st, 1868.

HON. JOHN S. PRESTON,

DEAR SIR,—At a special meeting held by the Washington and Jefferson Societies, the "Joint Committee to elect an Orator," was unanimously instructed to request for publication, the eloquent Address which you delivered before them on the 30th of June.

As the medium through which this favor is asked, permit us, to add our individual solicitations, and to request that you will not withhold from the public an Oration which met with universal approbation, and which will tend strongly to direct the attention of the young men of the South, to the just appreciation of the duty which devolves upon them, as representatives of those States—once conscious of their might and sovereignty—but which now lie bleeding at the footstool of Power.

Hoping, sir, that this communication will meet with your favorable consideration, we are, with sentiments of the highest esteem and regard,

Your obedient servants,

CHARLES J. FAULKNER, JR., *West Virginia*,
CHAIRMAN.

COMMITTEE OF WASHINGTON SOCIETY.

R. W. OWENS, *Maryland*,

G. S. COLEMAN, *Virginia*,

J. H. POPE, *Texas*.

DEWITT C. GALLAHER, *Virginia*,

M. P. REESE, *Georgia*.

COMMITTEE OF JEFFERSON SOCIETY.

T. R. JOYNES, JR., *Virginia*,

J. B. GANTT, *Georgia*,

J. ROCKWELL SMITH, *Kentucky*,

C. P. ELLERBE, *Alabama*.

I. RAYNOR, *Maryland*,

W. H. CLOPTON, *Alabama*.

UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA, July 1st, 1868.

DEAR SIR,—I have received your cordial note on behalf of the Washington and Jefferson Societies, asking, for publication, the address I had the honor to make before them.

Although this address was prepared with exclusive reference to the time and occasion of its delivery, trusting that concurrent circumstances might give it some efficacy, yet I cannot decline to submit to the public that which I ventured to utter before the Societies of the University of Virginia. Its artistical defects and literary crudities will be pardoned by all whose criticism I care for, and I am very sure that its sentiments and purposes will be approved by every true Southern heart.

I believe every lesson, profitable in the life of man, can be learned in the old and new annals of Virginia, and to them I have endeavored to turn the eyes and hearts of her youth. May a God of Truth vouchsafe to them the strength, as I know they have the virtue and the will, to work out the redemption of the grand old Republic.

Allow me, Sir, through you to express to the Societies my earnest gratitude for the graceful and cordial reception and attentions they bestowed on me, and which contributed so largely to make my visit to our glorious "Alma Mater," one of the happiest events of my life, and with special thanks for your kind and constant courtesy, I am, dear Sir,

Faithfully your friend,

And obedient servant,

JOHN S. PRESTON.

TO CHARLES JAMES FAULKNER, JR.,

Chairman Committee, &c., &c.

ADDRESS.

*Gentlemen of the Washington and Jefferson Societies
of the University of Virginia :*

THE Teachings of Greece came from Olympus, where Hesiod saw palaces fitted for the dwelling and the councils of gods ; and from Helicon, whence flowed that Hippocrene which still sends its fertilizing waters over all the realms of human thought and science ; and they came out of her deep blue skies, gazing into which Plato was taught, "what worlds and what vast regions hold the immortal mind." Beneath her soft Ionian skies, Homer learned to sing of gods and heroes combatting in the cause of love and honor. It was from Paros and Pentelicus the cold marble sprang to divine forms. In Tempe and Ilyssus Anacreon gathered his myrtle and vine. Demosthenes caught the lightning which flashed from his lips by those resounding seas which fell upon the shores of Marathon and Salamis and Thermopylæ, where Aristides and Themistocles advised, Miltiades commanded, and Leonidas died in the cause of Grecian liberty.

The teachings of Rome came from the virtues of two centuries, which have made her name, in all time, the proud synonyme of patriotism ; from laws, which, after the lapse of more than a thousand years, are again transfusing their spirit into the codes of free nations ; and from the rule of the world for five hundred years. .

The teachings of Israel were amid the waves of the Red Sea, and beneath the thunderings of Sinai, and the Christian's lesson was from the grander revelations of Calvary, and by "Siloa's brook that flowed fast by the oracle of God."

I propose to point you to a nearer lesson, in the historical grandeur of Virginia, and the wonderful gifts of Providence in her lands and her skies, her men and her women, her institutions, and especially in her legacies to you her living sons.

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If, in what I say, there be a lesson worth learning, it will be of equal application from Mount Vernon to the Rio Grande.

I have thought it safest gentlemen to recite this slight prologue, that you may have better guidance through my rambling speech, that you may know the goal we aim for, although we may go ever so deviously, through uneven, tangled, and, it may be, perilous paths. Keep in your minds the glory of Virginia, and my tinkling baubles will not mislead you very far.

There was a time—a long time—when as citizens of the State of Virginia, and thereby, citizens of the United States of America, we held our estate by a tenure unknown to the civil institutions of any other people. Each man's fealty was his own due, and he rendered service at his own will. Near thirty millions of people were obedient to the laws made by themselves, and to no other earthly power. Under these laws, self-imposed, order reigned, and liberty was regulated in its enjoyment, and, as we believed, was assured in its transmission. The whole compulsion was to do right—the sole restraint was to prevent wrong. Constitutions, laws, customs, and habitudes, seemed to insure perpetual freedom and make us the instruments of God's highest purposes for man, in our spontaneous adaptation of His decrees to our uses. The State of Virginia had created the constitution of the United States, the foundation principle of which was the confederation of Sovereignties for the purpose of mutually ensuring the civil and political rights of their citizens. It was the wisest application to modern civilization of the grandest conception of ancient wisdom. It seemed to concentrate the wisdom of three thousand years of philosophy, of speculation and of experiment, and the result presented a spectacle unfamiliar to the eyes of mankind. Greece and Rome may have afforded brilliant examples of a near approach to it; while their poets and philosophers dreamed of Liberty, and their wonderful law-givers and statesmen, at times, stood upon the very verge of our Truth, still between them and the essential principle we believed we had grasped, there was a profound deep they could neither fathom or span. Their philosophy speculated and their patriotism experimented on a thousand of the forms which man's incessant longing gives to his hopes of liberty. Aristotle counted these forms by the hundred, and with that consummate wisdom which came from the combined teachings of Socrates and Plato, commended the best parts to the Greek use.

Yet, notwithstanding all the efforts of primitive virtue, of philosophy, of later wisdom, even of divine inspiration, if we travel back along the foot-prints of history, we will find at every turn of the high road, and in every pathway, men struggling and battling, tearing and killing, nations swaying to and fro, orders, forms and dynasties, rising, shining, and sinking beneath the waves of Time. In all time we will see the earth red with blood, because tyrants would rule, and man will be free. By a thousand successions of forms, man has been kept to the yoke against which he has never ceased to fret and struggle, for amidst the darkest clouds of human degradation the immortal Spirit of Liberty has never paused in its efforts for his emancipation. The Macedonian conquests could not crush it—the bloody hand of Nero could not quench it—it did not perish in the filth and gluttony of later Rome—it survived the iron-breasted Attila, and the crown and sceptre of Charlemagne; in dark feudal times, it hid away in Helvetia's peaceful vallies and Jura and the Alps were its walls and guards—it winged the shaft of Tell—brooded over the field of Runnymede—gave a new soul to Europe by the word of Luther—drank the blood of Tyrants—swept across the far Atlantic—conquered a continent and gave to mankind a Washington and his Virginia. Not force or tyranny, not infidelity or superstition, not the seas or the wilderness could stifle that immortal spirit, which gave that gift to mankind, and made us what we believed ourselves to be, as citizens of the State of Virginia, and thereby citizens of the United States of America. Where is it now? Four days hence there will be celebrated over this continent that momentous act by which the world, we and our posterity were to gather the fruitage of that gift—for, the profane mockery—the blasphemous and ghastly jest is still enacted in the name of Washington and his liberty. In those days of Rome when Tiberius and Caligula and Nero made the whole earth foul with beastly corruption, she still called even them by the name of Cæsar—still pretended to elect her Consuls and Tribunes, and, by a disgusting farce, these Cæsars were supposed to die on the sacred spot where the Catos and Scipios and Cicero the "Father and deliverer of his country," laid down their office; and her so-called senators continued to sit in purple robes, as they did when—

"There was a Brutus who would have brooked
The eternal devil to keep his state in Rome
As easily as a king."

In those spectral mockeries no spark of Roman liberty was left. They were smouldering ashes, and their names were but foul and tattered banners drooping over graves and charnal houses. Their dust and shreds vanished before the blast of the Vandal, as swooping down like a gathered storm, he chased the Roman Eagle from Dacia to the shores of Africa. But still the high Roman names of Cato and Cincinnatus, Scipio and Cicero, were flaunted from the Capitol, with those of Tiberius and Domitian and the rest, as this week the high Virginia names of Washington, Jefferson, Henry, Madison, Marshall, the Masons, the Lees and the rest, will be flaunted over this continent, with those of the men who now "rule in Rome." For, if you take these Virginia names out of the rolls of American fame you leave faint glory for its festal days. Blot Virginia—Virginia deeds and Virginia names from the sun of American glory, and—

"Oh! dark, dark, dark,
Irrecoverably dark. Total eclipse."

And on that festal day, will it not be asked, where is Virginia—that Virginia that made that day and set it apart in the calendar of nations, that Virginia which created American Liberty and gave glory to a continent and an epoch. One of her earliest historians in his first lines says—

"By how many endearing motives is she connected with the world at large—as the elder branch of a Confederacy which threw down the gauntlet to kings—as the asylum of oppressed humanity—the faithful depository and guardian of public virtue—as abounding in intelligence and valor. A correct history of Virginia would be the history of North America itself—a portion of the globe, which, enjoying the privilege of self-government, promises to eclipse the glories of Greece and Rome."

And in further testimony of the grand historic renown which she had achieved even in her earliest days, the strongest and proudest nation of the earth, by order of the greatest living man, decreed national funeral honors to the Son of Virginia, and Napoleon Bonaparte bowed the oriflamme of France and his own laureled brow in reverence before the name of Washington, the Virginian.

Dare we, claiming to be the inheritors of this grandeur, now, with bated whisperings, trembling as we stand here beneath the crumbling pillars of our temple, talk timidly for one hour of that Virginia, as in my youth here I have seen the poor Indian in rags and

misery, wandering back from his exile, and straggling over the country searching for the traditional mounds which marked the greatness and the graves of his ancestors, and then crooning over them in sad, subdued mutterings. It is a crime now—it is treason for us to speak aloud of the greatness and virtue of our dead, who died for that Virginia Washington gave—the Virginia from 1776 to 1865, “’Tis treason to love her—death to defend her”—for that Virginia is ticketed District No. 1. But as in the wreck of nature moved by the hand of the Eternal God—

“Star after star from heaven’s high arch shall rush,
Suns sink on suns, and systems systems crush,
Headlong, extinct, to one dark centre fall,
And Dark, and Night, and Chaos mingle all,
’Till o’er the wreck, emerging from the storm,
Immortal Nature lifts her changeful form,
Mounts from her funeral pyre on wings of flame,
And soars, and shines, another—and the same.”

In truth, the orbit of nations is traced by the hand of God, as distinctly as that of the planets. In this orbit there are often tremendous repellent and disturbing forces operating under laws as fixed in the social as in the physical world. Even after a state is set in motion by the force of the highest human virtue and energy, the passions, the desires, the selfishness, the rapacity, all the sins, crimes, and even necessities of men, are continually at war with the majesty of Right and the power of Truth, and the contests result in the explosions of Revolutions or the crash of sudden change, sometimes for good—often, very often, for evil. In the body of the earth the terrible forces issuing from the central mass find their vent in fiery currents over its surface, or in the upheaving of the girdling oceans, which in wild and angry power twist and splinter it into shapeless fragments, leaving them as the only memorials of the past. So in nations and societies. Who can measure the measureless destruction, the fearful change, the misery and the woe, which come when those fierce passions of men are loosed, whose fury can be quenched only in those seas of blood which hide beneath their red waves, all pre-existing forms. It is not twenty years ago that noted philosophers and wise statesmen told the world, the age of war, like the age of Mammoth and Mastodon had passed—that the strifes and agonies of nations were at an end, and that the advance of civilization no longer

demanded the sacrifice of liberty. Yet the breath of these words was not cold when we, we who are here to-day, were gazing over—struggling in, a raging sea of blood, of contest more dire, destruction more complete, than ever came from the wrestling of dynasties, the cruelty of fanaticism or the ferocious ambition of the world's worst conquerors. We here, have seen war reëchoing the ruthless cry of its primal ferocity, and joining with the remorseless lust of avarice and fanaticism, sweeping away a people, destroying their institutions, and by the power of man repealing the ordinances of God. And now after the blast of that dread tempest, we turn our seared eyes upon the scene, we ask, in terror stricken bewilderment, where is Virginia? Is that shrunken, mutilated, charred corse, the mother of Washington, the creator of American Liberty, the great gift of God to the New World, the blessed among the nations, the exemplar and the model of the world?

Oh, the grand old Mother! Behold her this day seven years ago, as clothed in the panoply of Pallas* she arose from the lethargy of years, her eyes kindling with the memory of the giant sons of her youth. She grasps her spear and waves her golden hair and standing on her capitol, shouts again her ancient war-song, and calls around her, her warrior-children, and they come from her plains and from beyond her many-folded mountains, and from the shores of her resounding seas, and printing their knees in her soil, devote themselves to Virginia—an hundred thousand Decii, and rush forth to defend her borders, to save from sacrilegious touch, the very hem of her royal robes and to die for Virginia! Alas! alas! there she sits now, her limbs torn away, her bosom lacerated, her very womb stamped to barrenness by the heel of her conqueror, and her heart turned to stone, but still weeping blood. There she sits enthroned in misery at the feet of her conqueror, listening drearily to the wail of her pale and hollow-eyed daughters, cowering in her empty lap, or gazing at her dead sons, in their blood, still unentombed.

Oh! bear that sacred dust softly to the mother's feet, and bid her wake again to life. Tell her, in pious accents, that as long as the river flows where Jackson fought, as long as the mountain stands where Ashby fell, as long as faltering tongues can syllable the names

* Pallas Athenè was sometimes called "pro-machos," "the front-fighter," a name earned by Virginia on a hundred battle fields.

of Stuart and the Hills and Pegrams, and an hundred thousand others, as long as Mount Vernon and Monticello look down on her plains, as long as blood and ashes can fertilize her soil, as long as the incense of Truth and Right goes up to a God of Truth, the seed of Virginia cannot perish. Young men of the University of Virginia, that great God of all Truth hath appointed you the guardians and the heirs of this heritage of glory, of misery and of hope. Keep it in your hearts, plant it down deep, water it here from the fountains of science and true philosophy, gather the dew-drops from every battle field, and let it be warmed to new life by the sunshine of a century of unclouded glory.

By heroic valor as exalted as that which drove the Persian hosts from the shores of Greece, your fathers achieved that liberty which comes of a free government, founded on justice, order and peace. Besides this, the wisest precautions, and the keenest devices ever used by man in the construction of a government which was meant to perpetuate liberty, to strengthen, elevate and advance human society, were pursued by those founders of the American Government, and they were moulded into grand, and, as was believed, durable shapes, in the Constitution of the United States and the Constitutions of the States. They seemed almost divine inspirations given to solve the great problem of true human government by those wonderful written and sealed compacts of Sovereign States, guaranteeing to each other a system of liberty sufficient for all the wants and all the aspirations of man. It seemed to be the active reality of the dreams, the toil and the struggle of mankind for three thousand years. All man's fretting and strife seemed by this solution to have gained on earth their great reward. The whole world was confident in the principles on which the forms were erected, and believed in their sublime destiny even after Washington had gone back to Mount Vernon, and Jefferson to Monticello. That confidence was confirmed by the heroic struggle of eight years to achieve the release from despotic domination, and the profound wisdom, the clear, just and sagacious interpretation, and the unselfish abnegation which was manifested in constructing the intricate forms. And that confidence was again justified by fifty years of enlightened, orderly and progressive liberty, in which the example became a beacon-light to guide the stormy struggles of other nations. Now it was to uphold, preserve and perpetuate these very principles and

forms ; to multiply that truth, and to attain that destiny, that you, the immediate offspring of the founders, went forth to that death grapple which has prevailed against you, the victors rejecting the principles, destroying the forms and defeating the promised destiny. The Constitution you fought for embodied every principle of the Constitution of the United States, and guaranteed the free Constitution of Virginia. It did not omit one essential for liberty and the public welfare. You fought for the identical words inscribed by your fathers, and added thereto but one line, and that was to consecrate your work to the living God. You stood up amid the rage of battle and raising your pious hands, in which you held the wisdom of your fathers, you commended it to a God of Truth, and baptized it in your blood. You strove for that same liberty. That liberty was lost, and now the loud hosanna is shouted over land and sea—"Liberty may be dead, but the Union is preserved. Glory, glory, glory to Massachusetts and her Hessian and Milesian mercenaries." Your fathers' wisdom, your own struggle is but "a school-boy's tale, the wonder of an hour." God has allowed to prevail those powers which subvert the works of wisdom, and seek to eradicate the seeds of virtue. But His chronicles and all history tell us that forms built up by such powers, are but the "fruit of Sodom." When I look at you, who in the softness of youth fought a sterner, bloodier fight under Lee, Jackson and Johnston, than your fathers did under Washington, I know, aye, I do know, the seed of Virginia cannot perish ! We know, that which is sown is not quickened except it die, and we are taught, that if we be steadfast in the work appointed for us, God will give to that work life and power until what was death is swallowed up in victory. The regeneration of Virginia is the work God has appointed for those who have come here to-day in the names of Washington and Jefferson, for by no other names under heaven, save such as these, shall ye know your proper work.

It seems to be almost a determined law of nature that human history shall move in re-current, but to our apprehension, most irregular cycles, with distinct evolutions, however, which enable us at long apparent intervals to interpret its similitudes without resorting either to the artifices of imagination or the devices of fancy. When we look carefully at the records and see a great Truth, born perhaps on the outskirts of Roman civilization, at a village of Judea, slowly working its way to development, we may trace its progress, step by

step, sometimes with indistinct perception, again with absolute comprehension, until we find it piercing the human heart, fixing itself on human institutions and shining over the world, or else fading beneath the craft of human wit or the storms of human passion. Often in this progress great masses of storm-laden clouds obscure our whole horizon, at times sending forth terrific bolts which have slaughtered millions and blasted nations; in the old times, to feed ambition and the lust of power—in these later days—our days here, to satiate fanaticism and pauper avarice. We may read in the chronicles, of governments which bind in chains the image of God, morals which loose the passions and suffocate the charities of the human heart and religions which blacken the souls of men. We who are here to-day have seen all these concentrated into one act until it swelled into an assertion of superiority over all principles, systems, doctrines, and creeds which pertain to human science, usage and hope. We have seen this assumption trample out Truth and place its own trophies at the feet, and its own glittering, but false jewels on the brow of crowned Error. Under this reign, you may live to see a vague and profligate theology, a mirage of ethical expedients, together with a wilderness of rude despotisms or turbulent democracies, representing the religion, the morals and the civilization of the age, while Truth and Right seem lost forever. Subdued, fallen, stricken, wandering in captivity, the Hebrew still carried his Truth deep down in his heart, and when it seemed lost to earth amid the temples of idolatry, in the fullness of time it came forth again, even from beyond the wild hills of Galilee, and the wise of earth came to worship it. So all through the darkest epochs of human degradation, that hope of Liberty which dwells forever in the hearts of men, may trace its Truth, catching glimpses as of the fabled fountain, which sinks beneath the stormy seas still raging over it, to rise again in other lands or other times; or that same hope may pierce back into the past and see Greece beating away from her shores the hosts, the crimes and the errors of the East; or that same immortal hope, all else lost, may hear that mild voice, but speaking as by authority from Calvary, "Trust ye the Lord." Trust *we* the Lord.

Yes, my young countrymen, silence may brood over waste Palmyra, and Memnon's mute domain; the cry of nations from amid the cedars of Lebanon may be hushed; the sacred land pressed by a

dying Saviour's bleeding feet, may be a desert; cruel, bloody, remorseless tyrants may rule at Fort Sumter and at Richmond; but they cannot crush that immortal hope, which rises from the blood soaked earth of Virginia.

Gathering together our knowledge of these things and still guided by that cynosure of hope, we might make an effort to predicate and analyze our coming part in the great drama of this New World, in the past scenes of which we have already played with such various fortune. We would mark its differences and divergencies, move along its parallelisms and identities, and thus, holding on link by link, we might reach a point of just, perhaps prophetic, interpretation. We might trace a rude, coarse and mechanical philosophy, joined with a self-asserting fanaticism gradually but fatally abandoning the principles and subverting the forms of enlightened freedom. We might see a series of delusive and vicious expedients substituted for the action of revealed justice and established right, until the vulgar crudities of a government are exceeded only by its remorseless cruelties. We may not dare however to trust ourselves within that scope on this occasion. As sure as there liveth a God of all truth, the hour will come for the discussion. But, gentlemen, we have no true knowledge, if we assume that our condition, our fate, our destiny, or by what ever other, wrongful name we may call the ordinances of God concerning us, is either anomalous or altogether without example. Allowing for certain marked discrepencies, we are running the same career allotted to all under inexorable laws of universal application. The grand discrepant elements of being placed in the wilderness of a New World remote from the old nations; of the strange institution of African slavery, just terminated by wicked violence; of the equally strange composite institutions of Democratic Republicanism, now seemingly on the verge of terminating, either in ferocious anarchy or consolidated despotism, do not relieve us from a rigid and uniform tribute to the exactions of national life. The nature of man and the economy of God demand this tribute, and we are paying the first instalment and sealing the delivery with blood and fire, and what we are now. The chronicles are all over red with the story and we can claim no exemption, from the penalties of strife, bloodshed, national destruction and individual suffering imposed by the inscrutable will of God on the follies and crimes of man.

My countrymen, I have said and reiterate, that remove from the rolls of American fame the names and deeds of Virginia, and a barren field is left for festal declamation. I think I may assert, that save the bright and glorious tribute of her Southern sisters—almost if not quite her peers in some of her loftiest attributes—this is literally true. All else of which America boasts dwarfs before the grandeur of her record and yet the world has been deluded in to the belief that American liberty, progress and social elevation had their origin, their birth and growth, in other lines of latitude on this continent. This falsehood was concocted, and uttered almost as soon as Virginia had attained American Independence and Liberty and grafted them into the institutions—the danger past, and the fruition begun. It has been so persistently asserted for eighty years, that its authors and promoters, the whole world, and we ourselves, began to believe it. The busy world sheltering itself from its own perils, does not stop to refute lies which do not concern its own safety, and by their iteration is often induced to adopt them. It did not alarm us a few years since to hear the “awful goodness” of our Washington, our own Virginia Washington—he who stands in human history without a similar or a second, who “wherever the bright sun of heaven shall shine, his honor and the greatness of his name shall be—and make new nations”—I say, it did not startle us to hear our demigod belittled to the New England standard of heroism, in the measured, smooth, and mechanical rhetoric of one who was rated as something better than a pedant in letters and a charlatan in statesmanship—the majesty of Washington drafted by the rule and square of New England moral discipline, and painted in rhythm calculated on a note-key. Nor would it surprise or offend the world to see some Hessian Lieber, hired to defame his benefactors, or some Bancroft with ponderous mendacity write great books, and call them “History” to claim for New England the names and glories of the “Father of his Country,” the “Author of the Declaration of Independence,” the “Demosthenes of the New World,” the “Father of the Constitution,” the “Mansfield of America,” and others of like lustre. I have heard, that in remote countries to which the names of Massachusetts heroes have not reached, Robert Lee and Stonewall Jackson have already been so claimed by the propagators of New England fame. More shameless and far more dangerous falsehoods have been written of American history. We did not refute them, and

they have resulted in what we now are. It has been written, and believed and acted on, that all the wonderful achievements which gained these titles for Washington, Jefferson, Henry, Madison, and Marshall, that all they worked for, fought for, died for, lived for, was to establish a government under which their country, their Virginia, was to be mangled, parcelled out, obliterated; their children, the sons and daughters of their loins, robbed, slaughtered, and degraded to serfs, in the name of the Union; and, in the name of New England civilization and New England christianity, Washington and his brood of infidels and savages were to be driven from the temples of Christ, whose altars can be served purely, only by the chaste priesthood of Boston and Brooklyn. And, in pursuance of that assumption, it has been decreed by the justice and enforced by the arms of New England, that all the wisdom, valour, courage and virtue with which God had inspired Virginia, to establish Truth in a New World, were given in order that in less than two generations, the only visible life of that Truth left her should be the bleeding remnant of those heroic sons who on an hundred battle-fields vindicated their breeding in the struggle to preserve that which God had given their fathers—the Virginia from 1776 to 1861—Years of equal glory and sanctity in her calendar.

It was under that system which she proclaimed in 1776, that 1861 found Virginia grown to gigantic strength, proportions and majesty, with a social virtue and happiness not excelled by the most favored peopled of any age, and with her vast territory under the most genial skies, healthful, fertile and so various, as to embrace within her own borders all the forces necessary for material developments and all the attributes by which the highest civilization might be attained. You are familiar with the map. Set it before your eyes as we stand here in the centre, see what Virginia gained at Yorktown and lost at Appomattox. What she was, what was your fathers', what she is, what is yours. There, too, you may see how, long ago, with infatuated magnanimity she gave an empire, stretched from the Ohio to Lake Superior, to aid in the construction of that Confederation of States, which with maternal pride, she believed would perpetuate the order of Liberty she had achieved and bestowed on them, but which, with base, unnatural ingratitude, have wasted the heritage, and destroyed the womb that gave it birth. Within the borders which she retained for her own dower, and her inalien-

able sovereignty, there came, in that eighty years, order, progress, strength and rich prosperity, and with these virtue, refinement and true religion dwelt beneath her prevailing dominion. Her cities were busy and expanding—her fields were burdened with and redolent of golden harvests—her schools were filled with aspiring youth and wise teachers—her counsels were guided by unselfish patriotism—her people worshipped the God and cherished the glory of their fathers with pious devotion, ever “singing the merry songs of peace and treading the perfect ways of honor.” Behold Virginia then, mighty in strength, glorious in virtue, beautiful in her mountains, her plains, and her seas. There she reposes in the midday light of her glory, “with all the princely graces which adorn, and all the virtues which attend the good”—gaze at her. How grandly, gloriously beautiful she is. Close your eyes for a lustrum—and your ears to the earthquake and the tornado which are terrifying the earth. Turn again; behold! Where is Virginia?

“Silence is over thy plains,
Thy dwellings all lie desolate,
Thy children weep in chains.”

We have not read this story in the chronicles; it is not a tale told us by our grand-dams. Oh! could Liberty once more revisit her earliest home on these beautiful plains, how would her votaries flock from the uttermost borders to chant her eternal glories and die again for liberty and for Virginia, and, “she from the sacred ashes of her honor shall star-like rise again—as great in fame, as she was, and so stand fixed!”

If then, gentlemen, in my slight and rambling way of speech, (in pursuing which, fear I have worn away much of your good patience,) I have at all succeeded in indicating a shadow of the majestic virtue of Virginia in her past, and thereby, the wonderful dignity of your inheritance, may I not, for the rest, assume, that you, who, in your own persons, have gilded some of the brightest pages of her history, have a just appreciation of your filial duty in the effort to regain and preserve the inheritance and stamp it with still loftier titles. It is known that in what was Poland, even yet every mother, from those who descend from her kings, from the Sobieskis down to the humblest artisan, is religiously teaching her children to read, write, and as much science as they can get, and also, what is forbidden to

be written, the traditions of their country. By weight of arms Russia has crushed the life, but not the seed out of Poland. You, who are the sons of sires who first taught mankind the true lessons of liberty, have come to your mother's University to gain the first step toward the recovery of your father's lost lesson. Here you are to acquire the power of knowledge, from those who join genius and learning to public virtue and blood-proved patriotism. Your teachers have dragged their mangled bodies from the battle-field, that they may develope, shape, expand and purify your faculties, for the sacred purposes to which your allotted time on earth so earnestly appeals to you; for on you is imposed, by the Eternal God of Justice, the dread responsibility, the holy duty of redeeming a lost State. It is a task far more difficult, far more perilous than the creation of a new State. On you devolves a sterner, a more sacred duty, than that in which Washington's triumph, and Lee's failure were of equal glory. God knows, I do not mean to be blasphemous when I say, humbly, that redemption is a more glorious attribute of divinity than creation. Already some of you have watered the seed of Virginia with your fresh, warm, young blood. You did so because your faith was that the sovereignty of Virginia was the life and essence of that order of liberty your fathers had established. To this faith you gave every attribute of body, mind and spirit in four long years of death struggle. You saw by the light of your fathers' prophecy that when that sovereignty was merged in the nationality of the United States, the future historic grandeur of Virginia would be recorded under the style and title of District No. 1. Virginia is so ticketed, that her sentinel-guards may know their beat.

The forms, the deep convictions, the very life of ages dissolve like fading dreams. The vestiges of human energy, worn deepest, and most gilded by the proudest civilizations, are leveled, over-grown, hidden, lost. Time, itself, seems but a graduated scale to mark inexorable change. The earth beneath us, with its forests and mountains and seas, is hourly changing, the wide expanse around us dawns, glows, and fades; the heavens over us with all their soaring worlds, change. No mountain or wave, no radiance or star, is the same to-day and to-morrow—all is change; but nothing of God's making can perish, death itself is but a change of form, nature passes from shape to shape, but its element, its primal principle is the same. The hardest granite, the purest diamond, may be crushed, pulverized, sublimated,

turned to thin air, but new crystallizations will gather around the imperishable nucleus. Now it is a grievous and pitiable spectacle to contemplate the mouldering vestiges of our own departed greatness and lost liberty, the rotting and pestilential fragments which are left to us. It is too heart-rending to see the dreary desolation which has invaded our pleasant places, the homes of our industry, our opulence and our happiness. Indeed, it seems unnatural that a land so young, so vigorous and seemingly so blessed of God, should thus early sink into decrepitude and exhaustion; our fields, our vines and our flowers, so soon encroached upon by the forest and jungle, from which, but the other day, our fathers had conquered them, and to see too the cedars and the palms which were the pillars of our temples and the shelter of our people, prostrate and covered with fuzz and thistle, and the inner and the upper places at our altars held by the robber, the pharisee and the hypocrite. To you this change is terrible, it is so to my old eyes, now growing too dim to see even the bright things of earth, but must look beyond for their visions. You are just entering on the veiled path of life. What living light is before you, what sun-capped mountain, what beacon in the skies to guide your darkling steps? You look along the dead waste and level, disturbed only by the dust of the earth. Like the lost wanderer of the desert you gaze before you and see no living thing. You may sink in blank despair, but from your knees look upward, behold, deep-shining in the heavens, those bright eternal spheres which will give you light to guide your way, and cheer your heart with their divine melodies. Then young men, rise up! make one more effort. Draw from the funeral pyre of Virginia, the memory of her transcendent past, and like the Eastern Magi, it will reveal visions of a new life, and gladden your souls with dreams of a bright enduring future. In that past, you will see a noble Commonwealth, reared by wisdom and valor on the granite of Truth and Right, and building thereon a pure system of national liberty, with institutions the fruit of that liberty, and illustrated by men who guarded that fruit with the courage, and the deep, clear wisdom of unspotted patriotism; men who looked straight into the bright countenance of Truth, and drew from her all their inspiration. There too you will find the stern sublimity of that true "love of country," which was incarnate in the dust now reposing at Mount Vernon and Monticello. And if, with the drawn sword over us, the chains on our arms, the lash at our back, and the torch at our chamber doors, we dare draw

from a still nearer past, and speak of a people whose name is now blood-blotted from the rolls of nations, we might say, in God's hearing, that the records of those nations will be hunted in vain for a people, who in devotion to their rights, in stern resolve, in heroic valour, in calm endurance, in meek submission to, and humble reliance on a God of Truth, in the very piety of patriotism, surpassed that people who five years ago called themselves Virginians. Robert Lee, Stonewall Jackson and Leonidas Polk were the true type of the adaptation of these people to the cause in which they perished, and of these three Christian Soldiers, two were shot to death leading these people to death, defeat and degradation, and the other, thank God, still lives, the foremost living man of all the earth. This is the past, which with pious hands, you may draw from the funeral pyre of Virginia, and let it open to you its magic visions. These visions may be so dim as merely to beget dreams, but dreams, strangely mingling that past with the coming future, and floating on in the misty realms of Hope. Wise men have thought that if dreams be not realities, they may, at times pre-figure, if not become, the sternest realities of life. Marathon and Salamis did not perpetuate Grecian liberty—but, when long after—when Sparta was no more, and the Roman Consul had razed the wall and temples of Corinth and the Acropolis was a ruin, the Greek still dreamed of liberty, and hoped on. When the mighty Julius quenched Roman liberty in the Rubicon, and his Brutus had fallen, after the high Roman fashion at Philippi, and centuries of wrong had filled the world, the altar of Liberty was rebuilt on the plains of Ravenna; and, again, after more centuries had wrapped Christendom in night and chaos, the iron heel of superstitious tyranny crushed from the great heart of Nicola Rienzi a shriek which startled the sluggish ear of Europe, as if it were the echo of the raised voice of the first Brutus crying, "Justice, Liberty, Rome again is free." And then, too, see, in another land, the descendants of Alfred brought banners on which were blazoned a tyrant's oath, sworn at Runnymede beneath the frown and uplifted sword of new-born Liberty. And then, again, after more long centuries, in a far off land, beyond the far Atlantic, the descendants of these banner-bearers speak by the words of a brother, thus: "Is life so dear, or peace so sweet as to be purchased at the price of chains and slavery? Forbid it, Almighty God. I know not what course others may take, but as for me, give me Liberty or Death," and his brethren flocked to the struggle for liberty or death.

And, see again, in that struggle there came an hour so dark, so dreary, so hopeless, that the greatest souled man who ever lived in the tide of time, stood appalled, weeping over starving armies and a lost country. But even in that darkest hour he raised to the God of Right his own God-like front, and placing all his trust in him, cried, "Up, up once more brothers of the holy cause, and strike again for God and Liberty," and lo, his country is free! Later, still later, nearer and nearer, and the dim light of historic vision blazes into a meridian sun, and we see—as we see the Heavens at midday—we see a small feeble state stand forth untrembling against the power and the sentiment of the world, and strike the first blow for self-government and the faith of its founders; then an uprising over half a continent, a rush to Virginia, she already in the van, with her ancient armour on, the voluntary organizations, swift as the phalanx, firm as the legion, the fierce courage, the high chivalry, the unflinching devotion from Mannassas to Appomattox, the sacrifice of wealth, ease, luxury, the obedience to rule, the respect to order, the woman's work and woman's prayers, the open and abiding trust in God. The cause of all is one, and the teeming wombs of sister sovereigns pour forth their sons to mingle their blood on the field of sacrifice. From Gettysburg to Galveston the gurgling tide flows on together—no alchemy now, can separate that crimson flood. It is mingled for eternity, flowing on forever at the throne of a God of Truth. Come what may, the sneers of the world, which cares only for success; the slime of the conqueror who spits on dead lions; the world holds no page of human virtue, braver, purer, brighter, than that which tells the struggle, the fall, the woe of the people of the Confederate States. Why perished the Spartan at Thermopylæ? What gilds all the coasts of Greece and the Roman name with an imperishable halo? What exalts above all, Washington and Virginia—the Potomac and the Rappahannock? What but the pure and perfect love of that Liberty which will be a living worship when Washington, and Lee, and Virginia are no more? In the stormy night of a thousand years, let one star appear behind the dark-rolling clouds and from it, that Spirit of Liberty will come forth and brooding over the dark chaos, will make it pregnant with a new life.

Oh! my young countrymen, are these the dreams or the realities of history? Dare an eager, living hope, wakened by the visions, have a trust. There may be listening to these humble appeals, some

noble youth, who, with the soul of Washington, or Jefferson, or Henry, or Lee, will again bring the sacred banners on which regenerate Virginia has stamped her ancient blazonry, and plant them on yonder blue mountains, and that beneath these banners, before the long shadows of the setting sun shall hide them forever, you—you who are here to-day, will again sink your knees to the earth “with more impression than common suns,” that, beholding you thus, Virginia may a third time know her own offspring.

Think you I have forgotten God’s holiest, best gift to Virginia—Virginia’s purest glory? Amid all the grandeur of her historic renown, gilding it with superior splendour, amid the tribulations of all her struggles, sharing every labour, amid all the deep bitterness of her unnumbered woes, soothing every wound, and from first to last shedding over all her history a bright, tender, holy radiance, stand the women of Virginia. From the mother of Washington and the proud matronage of our first days, down to the pale, hungry, half-clad, patient watcher in the field hospital at Appomattox, the women of Virginia have proved their perfect title to the great name they bear, and their worth of the good gifts Providence has bestowed on them. It is eulogy enough for those who were of the days and kind of the mother of Washington, whose breeding made their sons the founders of Liberty, that they were worthy to be the mothers of those women whose sons and brothers have lost that liberty. Exalt our mothers and grand-mothers as they deserve, and alongside of every virtue, every grace of life, every gentle sympathy, every generous sacrifice, every act of high courage and noble fortitude, I will prove a parallel from among those who are beside us here to-day. In modest reverence, look around. See! they are here beside us, sharing our slavery, comforting us in our misery, and cheering us in our hope.

My office and duties in the Confederate State services, brought me to know more than any other man, the trials, the sorrows, the labours, the sacrifices, the heroic daring and almost super-human fortitude of our woman. Many long nights have I sat, choking with sympathetic but proud grief, as freed from the turmoil of the day, I read the sad stories coming to me, equally from the mansions of the rich and the huts of the poor, from every home and fire-side in the land. It was full of sorrow, but very glorious, the wives sending me their husbands, the mothers sending me all, every one of

their sons, in cheerful, heroic, but always in prayerful resignation, thus tearing out their hearts and offering them, in the name of a God of mercy, on the altars of their country's liberty. Oh! gentlemen, it is a tame tale now to talk to you and me of Roman and Spartan mothers. Not one of us here who has not seen hundreds and thousands whose story makes pale the proudest records of Greece and Rome. For us it needs no historian's art or minstrel's song, to tell the virtues of the noblest womanhood, which ever commended a struggling people to the blessing of God, for they are here still, our pride, our joy and our hope. Remember for a moment—can any man forget?—the thousand days and nights, through every hour of which the booming thunder shook the earth, and sent its death-bolt amongst us. Can that picture ever fade? Of the long trains of ambulances bringing to our women's bleeding hearts and ministering hands, the mutilated fragments of our children and brothers, and these women here—those beside you there—these gentle women of Virginia—in their houses and hospitals, nursed them—fed them—clothed them—prayed with them, and binding them up sent them forth again to join their enfeebled blows to the few who, with unbaffled valour, still fronted the countless hosts, as the firm-set rock beats back the wild and wasteful sea.

History dwells with fondest admiration on the story of those women who bore their husbands from a burning and starving city. With what glowing worship will good men in all time to come, read of the women of the Southern Confederacy! The women of Cretona worked for a day on the outward walls; the Bravarian wives staggered for an hour beneath their living burden. Here—here where we stand, and from here to the Potomac and the Rio Grande, for four long years of blood, the mothers worked their tears into food and clothing for their soldier sons, the wives stifled nature to feed their soldier husbands, the tender forms of maidens were hardened, wasted, haggard, beneath burdens which might crush the muscles of sturdiest men. Why there—it may be that mother, heard her first born had fallen, and with one heart-bursting sob, she turned away, and altered the garment for the tender one who was to take his place in the ranks; that wife, with one wild shriek, knows she is husbandless and while the pale orphan draws meagre life from her curdling blood, she works, and works and works for the common cause. Yes, they worked for us, they clothed us, they fed us, they

prayed for us, and still, now, in our chains, they work, they weep, they pray, and their great reward and recompense will be, that their prayers go up to a God of all truth, and by the savour of woman's tears and woman's prayers, that God, in his own good time, will give us deliverance and liberty!

Young men, is there not a lesson and a duty in the historic grandeur of this great gift of God—the women of the Southern Confederacy?

I trust, gentlemen, that I have not erred (and that no one will take it amiss) in deeming it appropriate to this occasion, at this day, and on this spot, and to you, to recall the memory of the origin and growth—the grandeur and fall of Virginia—to mark, however vaguely, along the brilliant pathway of her history, some of the monuments which are above the reach of the Gothic spear and battle-axe, and will live forever though she herself may perish beneath the slime and filth which is flooding her land and polluting her air. I trust, too, that speaking humbly, I may not be blamed for indicating some of the promises and hopes left to her sons and foster-sons. I might have more boldly opened the book of your memory and marshalled before you, in grand procession, a mighty host of heroes, statesmen and patriots, and as they passed have pointed to their blazonry, even as they stood in life, and uttered not one word for my lesson. What a wonderful God-like host it is! Behold the mighty shades as they move along in their majesty through a century of honor. See them from 1776 through the miracle of their triumph over England to Washington, standing by the sea at Yorktown, gazing over the plains of his redeemed Virginia, he sees, up by the mountains, his children, his peers, aye, before God and man, the peers and the equals of Washington losing that Virginia, and his grief is as proud as his triumph.

Young men, it is a long-stretched out and very noble line of shadows; shadows now on earth, glorious, immortal spirit in the presence of the God of Right, Truth and Justice!

The Athenian filled the labour of twenty years in the construction of his panegyric on the glories of his Commonwealth, and gave it that compact and massive vigour, and that exquisitely polished simplicity which still charms the world.

Your poor speaker can only tumble out in rude sentences, the sensations rather than the thoughts of a few very sad days busy in

uncongenial pursuits, in the midst of all our woes, on themes sublimer in action, import and destiny than were ever dreamed of by the Grecian. He urged the States of Greece to vie with each other in the freedom and justice of their laws, and in the protection of liberty; but with him liberty and equal right were philosophical speculations, while, if we speak, it must be to recite the most glorious Epic which was ever enacted on the trembling stage of human life, and then to tell the sad story of lost liberty, lost justice, and of hope almost abandoned. We must mourn over liberty as a birth-right—a once living worship, created, as we piously believed, to dwell forever in that land of ours, wherein she hath not now a place to rest her head. He eulogized the glories of a city—we mourn over half a continent; his gods sat on Olympus, ours is the one God, who hath the whole world for His footstool. Your mission on earth is to regain that lost liberty, and transmit, in undimmed glory, that heritage which was given to your fathers and taken from you. To your fathers, God gave success, fruition, repose and the admiration and gratitude of mankind. For you, He ordained defeat, failure, and the regret—if not the scorn—of the world. May not, oh! may not a God of mercy be pacified and allow you to redeem your inheritance and rebuild the sway of your fathers! A wise, good man says: “the sweat of any toil is dried at once on the brow where God places such laurels.”

Here then, in the days of your strong youth, prepare for the effort. Struggle and climb by the aid of the knowledge you gain within these walls, and by the wisdom and virtue you are taught in your own great history. Climb, climb, climb, until you reach a height from which the cynosure of liberty may never fall beneath your horizon; and then, when hereafter, you are again ready, commending yourselves to a God of Right, rise up with determined souls, and claim that which the noble Volscian demanded, when clanking his chains along the Roman ranks, he cried: “Give us that which men deserve who think themselves worthy to be free,” and then—no—my old eyes will not live to see it—but blessed be the God of my fathers—then—even now—here—standing on the sacred places of Liberty, I do see—as in a holy vision, along the untravelled waste of a fast coming future—I see the sacred image of regenerate Virginia, and cry aloud, in the hearing of a God of Right, and in the hearing of all the nations of the earth—ALL HAIL OUR MOTHER.

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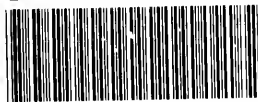
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